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1

HB 30 Testimony, Student Election Judges
House State Administration, Room 45
January 12, 2009
Secretary Linda McCulloch Remarks

EXHIBIT 3
DATE 1/12/09
HB 30

Good morning Mr. Chair, members of the committee.
For the record, I am Montana Secretary of State Linda McCulloch.

I am here today to support House Bill 30, an act allowing for student election judges at polling places and on various counting and election boards. Thank you to Rep. Wilmer for carrying this important piece of legislation.

House Bill 30 was a collaboration of election stakeholders who participated in the House Joint Resolution 46 work-group during this past interim. This SAVA subcommittee worked very diligently on a number of bills involving elections, including this bill.

I have been interested in student election judge bills for years and have been tracking other state efforts over the past few years.

I worked on my first campaign, a county commission race when I was in the 7th grade. It was the impetus that has fueled my passion for elections and voting and keeps me coming back to the polls each election, whether it's for President or the local irrigation district commissioner.

One of the more obvious impacts this bill will have in Montana, is that it will create a larger pool of election poll workers.

Over the years, Montana has seen a steady decline in its number of election poll workers.

This shortage could lead to mistakes by overworked and short-staffed election workers and to long lines and confusion at polling places.

By allowing 16 and 17 year-olds the opportunity to serve as election judges, this Legislature will not only help with the scarcity of workers, you will be providing an innovative civic experience to Montana students.

Montana's teenagers are the future voters of America, and giving 16 and 17-year-olds a first-hand look at how elections are run, will give them an appreciation of the value of registering and voting.

Thanks also to Rep. Wilmer for submitting my request for an amendment to this bill draft. As a teacher I believe that it is important that a student's school is kept in the loop about a request to be out of school to serve as an election judge. It is also vital that parents are a part of their child's decision to become an election judge.

A "yes" vote not only supports Montana's county election administrators and the education of Montana's teenagers, it clearly supports fair and accurate elections.

Mr. Chair, members of the Committee, I ask for your favorable vote for House Bill 30.

I am available to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time today and your support of Montana's elections.